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IN PERIL OF CHANCE. By C. F. G. Masterman, M. A., New York: B. W. Huebsch.

Mr. Masterman, who occupies the position of Literary Editor of the *London Times*, and who with others of the young Liberal Party has been carried into Parliament by the recent movement in English politics has "written in time of tranquillity," some essays of more than passing note.

These essays first appearing in substance, in the *Contemporary Review*, the *Independent Review*, the *Commonwealth*, the *Speaker*, the *Pilot* and the *Daily News*, are now fortunately collected in a book, the form and finish of which is worthy of the rare contents.

The theme of the various essays is sociological, in the fullest meaning of the term. It is a study of ideals, one might say of the passing of the Ideal, and of the relation of present day feeling to the problems of society. Political, social, religious and industrial conditions are vividly portrayed, although after the method of the impressionist; but through these conditions the author is seeking the motives and impulses which now animate society.

Literature is treated from the point of view of its social content, and the treatment given to Henley, Gissing, Meyers, Chesterton, Bernard Shaw, Wells and others, is such as to lay bare their deeper hearts, especially as they relate to the social problem of the age.

Religion also is considered from the standpoint of social need, and the work of Spencer and others of "The New Revolution," and Gladstone, Temple, Wescott, Creighton and Dolling of the older faith, is reviewed in the earnest effort to find what of religious faith yet remains of value to society. The note of despair is frequently struck as Mr. Masterman views the passing of spiritual certainties. This comes more forcefully to view when he studies the statistics of church attendance in London, in the essay on "The Religion of the City." He sees the majority of city dwellers sinking into a weary, unilluminated and utterly barren existence, with no horizon beyond the narrow round of toil.

But if there is despair, there is the energy of despair; or something rising out of despair which challenges effort. Condemning Mr. Chesterton's "Blasphemy of Optimism," the author does not turn to pessimism, but rather to melioration. The time of tranquillity shall pass. A new day of real social progress is foretold,

although there is no clear presentation of what that day shall bring, or how it shall come.

This study of present social conditions and ideals through the writings and work of others, is admirably seconded by direct observation on the part of the author; and the essays which will leave the strongest impression on the mind of the reader are those entitled, "June in England," and "In Dejection near Tooting," in which, with concentrated power, he gives a picture of the changes which an age of industrialism is working in the social life.

The scenes described, the personalities studied, and the issues characterized in this book are all English; but the forces seen at work in the inner life of society, as in the outward economic changes going forward, are also to be found in America, and this study of the deeper life of England will throw much light upon our problems in America.

The student of literature, the student of religious life, and the student of sociology will find equal satisfaction in the careful perusal of this book, from which one can but turn away with the feeling that he has spent profitable hours in the presence of a master mind, and with a spirit thrilled with profound and ennobling emotions.

The fineness and finish of the English used, will also prove no small delight to the lover of good prose.

LESLIE WILLIS SPRAGUE.

NEW YORK.

SOCIALISM AND POSITIVE SCIENCE. By Enrico Ferri, London. Independent Labor Party, 1905. Pp. 174.

SOCIALISM AND SOCIETY. By J. Ramsay Macdonald, London. Independent Labor Party, 1905. Pp. 184.

It is interesting at the moment when the British Parliament is regarding its Labor members with the respect due to a new political force to find the Independent Labor Party undertaking the issue of a Socialist's library as a medium for the expression of its teaching. Under the general editorship of Mr. Macdonald there will be produced a series of volumes aiming at an exposition of political philosophy and social economics from the standpoint of Socialism. Such an attempt should be warmly welcomed. Hitherto Socialists have in the main contented themselves with indiscriminating attacks upon existing society and with appeals to sen-